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THE

OCULIST.

A

POEM

Addreſs'd To

Sir *William Read*, Knt.

Her MAJESTIES Oculiſt in Ordinary.

LONDON,
Printed, and Sold by *A. Baldwin* near the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-lane*. 1705.

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TO
Sir *William Read*, Knt.
Her MAJESTY's Oculiſt, *&c.*

SIR,

IN taking this way of giving You Joy of the gracious Court-Favours You have lately received, I have at laſt this Plea to encourage my preſumption; That as Your own publick Reputation and Deſerts obtain'd You thoſe Favours, 'tis but reaſonable that the Congratulation I make You on that Subject ſhould be publick too.

And becauſe 'tis to a Profeſſor of the Medicinal Operation, I tender this Addreſs; I'll endeavour to make the Preſent a little worthier Your Acceptance, by treating You with a ſhort Lecture upon the Phyſical Science it ſelf, for my Introduction.

Ars longa, vita brevis, has been laid down as an undeniable Maxim. The full Acquiſition of Knowledge being a Chace too long to be finiſh'd in a Life. 'Tis true, in ſome particular Branches of Knowledge, the Perfection of Science may be attain'd, and that too perhaps with a much ſhorter purſuit than the whole Labour and Study of a Life. For inſtance, in *Law* or *Divinity*, the Gentlemen of the Long Robe, and thoſe of the Gown, have a fair proſpect of arriving at the ultimate height of Knowledge in either of their Studies. And why? Becauſe the Humane recorded Oracles in the one, and the Divine ones in the other, the Statutes of Man on one ſide, and thoſe of a God on the other, are thoſe viſible Guides as lead through the whole Body of Learning in either of

thoſe Faculties; inſomuch that the great Students here may conſummate their learned Labours, whilſt the Doctor of Divinity, as well as that of Laws, may without an Arrogation or Self-flattery juſtly challenge either Title.

Thus we ſee the full Graſp of Knowledge in either the great Art of guarding and ſaving our Eſtates, or that greater one of ſaving our Souls, is all within Humane Reach. But that of ſaving our Bodies, an entire perfection in the Medicinal Art is utterly unattainable. A true and compleat Doctorſhip in *Phyſick* no humane Study cou'd yet ever accompliſh.

Here, alas, it leads us to a melancholy Reflection, when we look round us and above us, and there behold in the great Work of the Creation ſuch an unchangable Conſtancy in the Movements of ſo many Spheres of Glory, the unperiſhable Duration in the great Cæleſtial Bodies, and that unſhaken Order and Harmony through the whole Pile of the Univerſe; and at the ſame time carry our Contemplations ſo far, as to conſider, that this vaſt Fabrick of the greater World was only built for the Service of that leſſer one, Man; all thoſe Movements, that Order and Harmony, and all the wond'rous Influences and Products of 'em, as Day and Night, and Years and Seaſons, all for his Uſe and Benefit: Here, I ſay, 'tis but a ſad Reflection to look home to our ſelves, and there find, that though the great Diſpenſer has been pleas'd not only to fix his Favourite Creature, *Man*, in ſo exalted a Poſt, and likewiſe to form him after his own Image, the moſt curious Piece of the whole divine Workmanſhip; nevertheleſs at the ſame time he has moulded and framed him a Machine ſo tender, ſo liable to a thouſand injurious Shocks and Jarrs to put him in diſorder, and at laſt into Confuſion; that certainly he may ſit down with a Sigh to think, that his great Servant the whole fair Creation about him ſhould be made of ſo laſting a Compoſure, and himſelf, the Lord of it, of ſo brittle a one.

'Tis true, the Infinite Wiſdom has graciouſly pleas'd to furniſh out a very large Refectory for the Medicinal Uſe of Man, not only diffuſing through the hidden Minerals of the Earth, but likewiſe implanting ſome ſpecial Virtue or other in almoſt every Flower of the

the Garden, down to the Herbage and Weed of the Field; all, in their ſeveral Claſſes of Service, beneficial to Mankind.

But, alas, to reap that large Benefit by finding out all thoſe ſeveral ſelect Virtues, here the truly laborious Student has no Manual, no original Pandects, neither humane Authority nor divine Precept; no Chart to ſteer by to the diſcovery. The Treaſure he gains he muſt hew out by his own Search and Experience. And though perhaps ſome of the more generous Profeſſors of this noble Science may have tranſmitted a great part of their particular Diſcoveries as a Light to ſucceeding Poſterity; nevertheleſs 'tis not reading of Phyſical Volumes only that can perfect the Phyſician.

For conſidering the infinite Variety of Tempers and Conſtitutions attended by ſo many various Incidents, Cauſes and Circumſtances in corporal Infirmities, even the beſt recorded Golden Rule of Art, may prove but a fallible Tradition, if Book-work Knowledge were the Phyſicians only Guide.

The unfadomable Depth therefore of this great Science duly conſidered, how happy would it be for the Race of Mankind, if the Profeſſours of it would rather content themſelves with cantoning out ſo large a Study into ſeveral Provinces, with a fairer poſſibility thereby to each Profeſſour of rendring himſelf the abſolute Maſter of Knowledge in a narrower diſtrict of Medicinal Study; then what can reaſonably be expected from thoſe more curſory Rovers that take too wide a Field to range in; and that too from the very Principles of Humanity, as having no leſs a Care than the preſervation of Life entruſted to them.

But whether from prevailing Cuſtom, or a Child of a worſe Parent, *viz.* from the Avarice or Vanity of the Profeſſors, ſuch has been the Depravity of too long Ages, that the Students of this Art, nay, poſſibly at their very firſt Start into it, ſet up for an Univerſal Knowledge, even the very leaſt of them, eſpecially if dignified with the Titular Feather of a Graduate, ſhrinks not at the taking of ſo important a Charge as that of humane Life upon his Hands, but approaches every ſick Bed-Chamber, and adminiſters to every Humane Malady as boldly and as magiſterially, as if he had been honour'd with a ſecond Inſpiration of a *Solomon*, and let

in to the whole Virtual Secrets of Nature, from the Hyſop on the Wall to the Cedar of *Lebanus*.

'Tis from this unhappy Ambition of the Medicinal Profeſſors, the Affectation of Popularity on one ſide, and the Graſp at Intereſt on the other, in undertaking more than they can weild, a penetration into ſo boundleſs an Art as an univerſal Phyſical Doctorſhip; that old Rhime has but too much Reaſon in it, in giving them this Character:

The Grave my Faults do's hide,
The World my Cures do's ſee,
What Youth and Time provide,
Are oft aſcribed to me.

Theſe, Sir *William*, are the Men (for now I muſt ſpeak home to Your ſelf) that look down with an Eye of Contempt on ſo narrow a Verge of Study as the Maſterſhip of Art which You profeſs; not conſidering (at leaſt not acknowledging) that there is infinitely more Honour juſtly due to the ſhining out in one ſingle Excellence, (for You challenge but little more than the Arts Maſterſhip of an *Oculiſt*) than in getting a glimmering Light into all the numerous Branches of the Medicinal performance. You, *Sir*, have made it the Study, (I may ſay) of a Life (for You are not Young in Your Art) to gain one particular accompliſht Perfection: And they perhaps have huddled a whole Fardle together too large for their Gripe, and undoubtedly let the beſt Half of them ſlip through their Fingers.

This I may very honeſtly ſay without a Reflection, That he that pretends to an univerſal Perfection in the Medicinal Preparations and Applications for the Cure of a hundred ſeveral Diſeaſes, how great a Doctor ſoever he may be, poſſibly in a Score of that Number, 'tis a hundred to one he's a Quack in the other Fourſcore: And 'tis from hence, this only Miſmanagement of the Profeſſion, that that Noble Science, which otherwiſe wou'd deſerve a much better Treatment, is become the Jeſt and Scoff of ſo many daily Satyrs and Libels againſt it, when the World is too apt to uſe a little hard Rallery on the Profeſſion it ſelf.

But not to touch on ſo harſh a String; however for a fair Deciſion of Merit, we leave the World, at leaſt the thinking and impartial

part

part of it, to judge, whether the Honeſt Choice (ſuch as Your ſelf have made) of a more ſingular Study be not preferable to a general one, eſpecially when 'tis a Study wholly appropriated to the Service of Mankind.

From this fair Ballance, this Teſt of Merit in the Caſe between You, to anſwer the Snarls of Detraction and Malice againſt You, and ſet the Royal Donation of the late Honour confer'd upon You, at a true Light: If the general Practiſers of Medicine cou'd give good Security that they underſtood all they profeſs as throughly as You do what you profeſs; and withal that they acted from as generous a Principle too, *viz.* That they were as heartily and as freely ready to ſerve the Poor for Nothing, as the Rich for their Money, undoubtedly with theſe Qualifications they wou'd all ſtand as fair Candidates for the ſame Title. Till then, Deſert and Juſtice are thoſe Orators for You, as juſtly give You the Laurel before them, by declaring for You, that the Beſt Claim to Royal Favour is on Your own ſide, whilſt Veracity in the profeſſion of Art, and the publick Service in the Exerciſe of it, are, and ought to be, the higheſt Recommendation to the Smiles of Majeſty.

'Tis true, to furniſh the babling World with a little idle Impertinence, Your Detractors flatter themſelves with one conſiderable Triumph over You, which is, that You are not a Man of Learning and Languages: Yes, from this Battery they level their whole Artillery againſt You, little thinking how weak a handle of offence Your Scholaſtick Adverſaries have found in this Objection, when (throughly examin'd) it rather redounds to Your Honour that you have made Your ſelf Maſter of ſo much True Knowledge, by a Natural Genius and Application, without the help of their learned Leading-Strings.

Beſides, it looks like a very Chimerical Notion, to fancy that the Art of *Phyſick* and *Surgery* can ſpeak no *Engliſh*, whilſt 'tis *Latin* and *Greek* only that can furniſh the Laboratory or the Plaiſter-Box. If this blind Argument rouzes all the whole loud Cry againſt You, truly, *Sir*, Your grinning Antagoniſts have the Opticks of their Reaſon ſo very dark-ſighted, that they want the Operation of an *Oculiſt* themſelves, if poſſible to enlighten their cloudy Underſtandings.

THE OCULIST.

AS the Great FOUNDER, when he built his vaſt
Creation, framed his Nobleſt Structure laſt,
MAN, *Nature*'s lovelieſt Pile, his own beſt Mould;
Wiſely ſo fair a Fabrick to uphold,
Next his own Guardian Influence, ſo pleas'd,
The generous *Phyſician*'s ART he rais'd,
Great Nature's ſecond *Architect*: So large
A Truſt, and Care ſo weighty to diſcharge,
Let th' humble Sons of that great ART eſſay
Only to prop our courſer Walls of Clay.
The OCULIST moves in an Orb more bright:
Life's Luminary, Nature's leading Light;
That Glorious *Organ*, through whoſe Cryſtal Streams
We view the Univerſe whole ſhining Beams,
The EYE's his Province; that bright Optick Sphere,
By which we move, and act, and guide, and ſteer.
Thou Life's moſt tender *Senſe*, and beſt Delight,
Oh thou ineſtimable Gem, the SIGHT;
No Price too high the darling EYES to ſave,
When Life without 'em's but a walking Grave.

Sight

Sight, 'tis by Thee our Sweat and Labour's crown'd:
Why walks the *Traveller* the World's wide Round?
For Thee his well rewarded Toil purſues:
By Thee the Wonders of the Globe he views.
What but a bright enlightning Beam from Thee
Bends both the *Lover*'s and the *Miſer*'s Knee!
What Ray but thine, the amorous *Strephon* warms?
Thou ſhew'ſt him all his Ador'd *Celia*'s Charms.
Nor does the *Hoarder* with leſs Charms behold
His equal *Idol* his dear dazling *Gold*.
Why *Juno*'s Bird ſo gay! And why the Spring
Does all thoſe lovely flowry Garlands bring!
Nature's whole *Eden*-Pride thro' Thee muſt paſs:
Fair *FLORA* decks her Face but in thy Glaſs.
Why do proud *Temples* raiſe their Heads ſo high!
And why thoſe coſtly Gems of MAJESTY!
So deck'd the *Palace*, ſo adorn'd the *Shrine!*
By Thee the World's whole Robes of Glory ſhine.

Nor do the Glories of the World below
Thro' thy enlivening Current only flow.
What made th' illumin'd Face of *Moſes* ſhine?
His Eye had ſeen a Glimpſe of *POW'R Divine*.
Ay, thence his borrow'd Beams. Who is't but Thou
Art ev'n reſerv'd to deck the Heaven-crown'd Brow?
Yes, 'tis to Thee, to Thee is only given
The whole Fruition of the Joys of HEAV'N.
In the bright Manſions of Eternity,
The *Taſte*, the *Touch*, the *Smell*, are all laid by.

Thou the laſt more than *Eagle-ſighted Senſe*,
Rais'd Face to Face to view OMNIPOTENCE;
Thine are the Raptures of the bleſt Abode,
The *Beatifick Viſion* of a *GOD*.

If Heav'n deſigns ſuch Honours to the EYE;
What Raptures on that Theme can ſoar too high!
Well might the Ancient Knees their Worſhip pay
To the World's *Glorious Eye*, their *God of Day*.
And if bold *Eſculapius* cou'd aſpire
So high, to claim *Apollo* for his Sire,
The OCULIST, with his more ſhining WORTH,
Is ſure the radiant *Phœbus* Eldeſt Birth:
When like the *Sun* himſelf his Beams diſplay,
And to benighted Eyes let in the Day.

As this, of ARTS the Greateſt, boaſts ſuch Fame;
What Honours muſt its *Greateſt* ARTIST claim?
That Title juſtly Yours, and Yours alone,
Your very envying Rivals all muſt own;
Thoſe Rivals, vain Pretenders to the Chace,
Who but ſet out too ſure to loſe the Race.
Who lagging all behind, ſo far outrun,
See by Great *READ* the whole bright Laurel won.
Yes, in that Cauſe their loſing Game they yield:
READ is the leading CONQUEROR in this Field.
The *Operations* of his abler Hand
Shall in recorded Rolls of GLORY ſtand,
Whilſt their faint Copies of his fairer SKILL
Scarce half a Page of *READ*'s wide Fame ſhall fill.

Go

Go on then, Sir, and claim your MERIT's due,
MERIT ſo known, and ſo rewarded too:
That not the common popular Voice alone
Has given the Garland here, the Prize your own;
But ev'n th' *Imperial Beams* their Influence ſhed,
To gild the *Bays* on that deſerving Head.

Whilſt *Britain*'s Sovereign Scales ſuch *WORTH* has weigh'd,
And *ANNE* her ſelf her ſmiling Favours paid:
That Sacred Hand does Your fair Chaplet twiſt
Great *READ* her own Entitled OCULIST.
With this fair Mark of HONOR, Sir, aſſume
No common Trophies from this ſhining *Plume*.
Her Favours by Deſert are only ſhar'd;
Her Smiles are not her Gift, but her Reward.
Thus in Your new fair Plumes of Honour dreſt,
To hail the Royal Foundreſs of the Feaſt,
When the Great *ANNE*'s warm Smiles this Favourite raiſe,
'Tis not a Royal Grace ſhe gives, but pays.
Well She remember'd with a grateful Thought
How from the good *Samaritan*'s Copy taught
Her poorer Sons of *Mars* and *Neptune* ſtand,
With up-lift Eyes all Debtors to that Hand.

Your miniſtring Art and unbought Labours given
For no Return, unleſs repay'd by Heav'n.
So frankly good, and ſo profuſely kind,
Has Your long Charitable Glory ſhin'd;
So bred in tender Pity's generous School,
Kind as the Angel at *Bethesda*'s Pool.

This

This Merit has Your Honour's Baſis lay'd
By an endebted Crown thus juſtly pay'd.
They who to Honour mount by Birth alone,
That's but their Fathers's Work, and not their own.
Thoſe Chaplets the moſt fragrant Odours breath,
Where Worth and publick Service twine the Wreath.
True Honour do's its own Foundation raiſe;
And for a laſting Monument of Praiſe,
Rewarded Virtue doubly gilds the Bays.

FINIS.